

The Narcotic Problem

I.
THE STORY OF DRUGS. By Henry C. Fuller. The Century Company.

THE peculiar fascination that the term "drugs" holds for the average man is largely due to the fact that there have been so few books written on the subject in an untechnical and interesting manner. Although that esoteric slip of paper, the physician's prescription, must always remain to the layman something to wonder at, to strive impotently to understand, the story of the origin and preparation of the major drugs are subjects well within his mental grasp. There is, Mr. Fuller points out, considerable haziness in the mind of the vast majority of users of remedial preparations, as to what is meant by the term "drugs." To some it is practically synonymous with that of "narcotic." To others it suggests chemicals. Properly, it refers to a "substance or mixture of substances used as a medicine, or that enters into the composition of a remedial agent." Another popular misconception on this subject is that Germany, before the war, produced most of the drugs used by the world. While it is true that Germany manufactured a large number of synthetic drugs, mainly the coal tar derivatives, the prime reason that most drugs came from that country was that Hamburg was the clearing house for the world's supply of drugs, a position it now, of course, no longer occupies.

Until comparatively recently, all drugs were manufactured by the retail drug stores. With the introduction of machinery and the increasing demand for drugs from a population becoming largely concentrated in cities, this work was gradually taken up by large pharmaceutical houses. "The modern medicine manufacturing plant," says Mr. Fuller, "is a development of the past seventy-five years. The ever-increasing demand for agents that make sick men well has taxed the ingenuity of the scientist and the mechanician. One has evolved the numerous types of standard remedies and the myriad meritorious formulas; the other has invented and perfected apparatus required to produce preparations of stable and uniform character in large quantities."

Of all the substances employed in the manufacture of drugs, there is none as important as grain alcohol. More than one scientist of unquestioned reputation has made the statement that, without an unlimited supply of alcohol, Germany could never have obtained her commanding position in the chemical world, could never have lasted so long during the late war. According to the author, "There is hardly a pill or tablet formula that does not contain some valuable ingredient, either in the form of a drug extract, which has been obtained from a crude drug by means of alcohol as a dissolving agent; or an alkaloid or other pure substance made by a process that has necessitated the use of alcohol as either a crystallizing medium or a reacting component. If alcohol had not as-

sisted in shaping the ingredients, the pills and tablets could not have been created. Then, there are many liquid preparations, standard fluid extracts, tinctures, liquid tonics, digestives, and other specialties numbering into the thousands, that require alcohol to hold their remedial principles in solution and keep the preparations from spoiling. Nothing else thus far discovered has been able to supplant alcohol as a basic material for the medicine industry."

Mr. Fuller discusses more than the origin and preparation of drugs. There is a chapter on vaccines and serumtherapy, and also one on that still hazy subject, vitamins. Narcotic drugs, their nature, effects and legitimate uses, are considered. An interesting and helpful chapter is devoted to hay fever, that prevalent malady almost indigenous to this country. Drug legislation comes in for a short discussion. There is, finally, in the appendix, a long list of common drugs, with which every family medicine chest might well be supplied.

II.

OPIATE ADDICTION: ITS HANDLING AND TREATMENT. By Edward Huntington Williams. The Macmillan Company.

ALTHOUGH Dr. Williams's book is primarily intended for physicians, as its title indicates, the introduction to the volume is of interest to the American public, since it sets forth some plain facts, in nontechnical language, regarding the enforcement of the so-called Harrison narcotic law, which was enacted by Congress in 1914. The interest in this lies in its relation to the enforcement of the prohibition laws under which so many Americans are living in a state of open protest, and the obvious moral is that if the narcotic law cannot be enforced it does not appear possible that our prohibition laws will or can be enforced either.

Dr. Williams says that the Harrison narcotic law "was not a hastily conceived statute rushed through as an emergency measure." On the contrary, "it was formulated with the

knowledge and assistance of medical men and of medical associations, thus bearing the stamp of approval of the very persons who, next to the narcotic users themselves, were most vitally affected by its provisions. For this law placed restrictions upon members of the medical profession, and in effect dictated the manner of practicing the profession of medicine to an extent scarcely approached by any legislation in recent years. . . . Never for one moment has its enforcement been neglected. On the contrary, a veritable army of specially appointed officials—Federal, State, county and city—have devoted their energies to the law's rigid enforcement."

As to what is the result of all this Dr. Williams says: "The question cannot be answered in a sentence. But it seems to be the consensus of opinion of Federal, State and county officials who are most closely in touch with the situation that the number of drug takers and the amount of drugs consumed to-day, after five years of this active legislation, is just as great as, if not, indeed, considerably greater, than it was five years ago."

In common with the prohibition law the narcotic law has its illegal parasite, the "bootlegger" of the one being matched by the underworld "peddler" of drugs, who goes the "bootlegger" one better by giving samples of his drugs away until he has created another addict and another "customer," whom he bleeds to the last extremity. If a model law in some respects, admirably enforced, produces such results as this, what may we expect from a prohibition law that is not a model and which is not enforced for the simple reason that it is physically impossible for the entire Government of the country to enforce it?

Dr. Williams cites the case of a practical step taken in San Diego and Los Angeles, Cal., to "emphasize the medical side of the narcotic problem"—the most important reform needed in the narcotic law, in his opinion—through the establishment of narcotic clinics, which had encouraging results and which also showed that "the surprising small number of these individuals (drug addicts) seems to refute the popular idea that drug addiction is running riot in our communities."

Again the Sex Problem

SEX AND COMMON SENSE. By A. Maude Royden. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

THE recent visit to this country of Miss Agnes Maude Royden, whose addresses here printed were made before London congregations or audiences, can scarcely add to the interest of this uncommonly important and appealing book. These lectures were intended "to provoke discussion and engender light" (as their author remarks) upon the present conditions among women in England, particularly in respect to the British laws and traditions bearing upon marriage and divorce. The greater freedom of divorce in this country does not in the least affect the general tenor of her arguments, and perhaps throws into even higher relief Miss Royden's lofty ideals and standards of life, loving and marriage.

As is fairly well understood in this community, Maude Royden is England's foremost woman lay preacher, and the first woman to appear on a lecture platform of the Oxford University Extension Course. During the war she established a clinic where she discussed moral, religious and domestic problems with women and girls. She is now a preacher in the Guild House in London, where she conducts "fellowship services." Her ideals of worship are new, and are freely expressed before audiences made up from all classes and of all forms of belief. Since her college days at Cheltenham and Oxford, and her work at the Victoria Women's Settlement in Liverpool, she has been prominent in debating, and she has devoted her scholarship and talents to social problems in which she has always been deeply interested. She is the youngest daughter of Sir Thomas Royden of Birkenhead, and was born in 1876. In 1917 she became pulpit associate to the Rev. Joseph Fort Newton (now of the Church of the Divine Paternity at Seventy-second street) at the City Temple in London; and was the first woman to preach there.

In her "Preface to the American Edition" of her book Miss Royden makes a point of "the nobility of the

sex problem" and appeals with great earnestness for a frank and honest consideration of the matter by the American people, who, she believes, are particularly well placed to break away from foolish and mischievous traditions of secrecy and muddling. She says:

It is not the abnormal nor the bizarre that interests most of us to-day. Ordinary men and women want to first know how to live ordinary human lives on a higher level and after a nobler pattern than before. I believe the first essential is to realize that the sex problem, as it is called, is the problem of something noble, not something base. It is not a "disagreeable duty" to know our own natures and understand our own instincts; it is a joy. The sex instinct is not "the fall of man." It is a thing noble in essence. It is the development of the higher, not the lower, creation. . . .

This is to me the great teaching of Christ about sex. Other great religious teachers—some of them very great indeed—have thought and taught contemptuously of an

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animal nature. "He spoke of the temple of His body." That is sublime! That is why vice is horrible; because it is the desecration, not of a hotel or a shop, but of a temple. I believe that we must above all have courage. Human nature is sound, and men and women on the whole, want to do what is right. The great impulse of sex is part of our very being, and it is not base. Passion is essentially noble, and those who are incapable of it are the weaker, not the stronger. If, then, we have light to direct our course, we shall learn to direct it wisely, for indeed this is our desire. Such is my creed. My prayer is for "more light." And my desire is to take my part in spreading it.

In succeeding chapters Miss Royden discusses the subject under these heads:

"The Old Problem Intensified by the Disproportion of the Sexes," "A Solution of the Problem of the Unmarried," "Consideration of Other Solutions of the Problem of the Disproportion of the Sexes," "The True Basis of Morality," "The Moral Standard of the Future: What Should It Be?" "A Plea for Light" and "Friendship." Chapters VIII, IX, and X, upon "Misunderstandings," "Further Misunderstandings, the Need for Sex Chivalry" and "The Sin of the Bridegroom," have been added, as Miss Royden tells us, to meet various difficulties, questions or criticisms evoked by the addresses which form the earlier part of the book.

Miss Royden's attitude on divorce is not to be condensed into a phrase or a sentence. Rightly to understand her general deductions and particular conclusions one must read her chapters with attention and with "an open mind," but not an open mind of the kind which somebody has referred to ironically as "open at both ends." In her final chapter she crystallizes, as far as can be, her cumulative beliefs in this matter.

A questionnaire circulated among the members of the senior class of Yale yielded the information that Dickens is the prose author ranking first in favor, with "A Tale of Two Cities" the favorite novel. The sec-

ond choice is "If Winter Comes," by A. S. M. Hutchinson. "Crossing the Bar" is the favorite poem, with Kipling's "If" not far behind.

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Odd Plays of Old Japan

Continued from Preceding Page.

spiration; since immensely practiced as the performers are, they appear to strain each time, along with the actors, at an intense and concentrated pitch of all their thought and energy.

The effect of reading these short plays, one after another, each developed in a similar manner, is, of course, monotonous. But they are not meant to be read. They are libretti, in the same sense that the old miracle plays are but the word accompaniment to the spectacle. For the fidelity of the translation the reviewer is of course unable to speak. But Miss Amy Lowell, who confesses herself equally ignorant of Chinese, says that the author's Chinese translations contain the soul of the original. So if one may in Lowell's manner trust to the response of his own soul, the reviewer will throw prudence to the winds. They certainly sound authentic. But if they are not, they are little gems of English. The simplicity, the clearness, the lofty tone of the language, taken in connection with the touching naivety of the action, impart a Greek austerity and beauty.

ALGERNON TASSIN.